

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested. Claims 1, 3 and 4-24 are currently pending. Claims 1 and 2 were rejected by the Office Action. Claim 1 has now been amended and claim 2 cancelled. Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claim 3 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In response, claim 3 has been amended to be independent by incorporating the subject matter of its prior parent claim 2. Applicants would also like to thank the Examiner for allowing claims 4-24.

Objection to the Drawings under 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a)

The drawings were objected to for not showing every feature of the invention as specified in the claims. Specifically, the Office Action cites that the limitations of “a disabling mechanism”, “ancillary equipment” and a “switching mechanism” is not illustrated in the Figures.

During the telephone conference on September 2, 2003 between Examiner Singh and Steven Thiel, attorney for the applicants, it was agreed upon that the objections to the drawings should be overcome based on the amendments to the claims, as indicated above, and the following comments. Specifically, claim 11 has been amended so that it no longer calls for a “switching mechanism.” Regarding “ancillary equipment”, page 10 of the specification states that “the example of Figure 2 uses ancillary equipment in the form of doorbell answering system 170.” Accordingly, the doorbell answering system 170, as depicted in Figure 2, represents one example of a piece of ancillary equipment. Lastly, as discussed, depiction of a “disabling mechanism” within Figure 2 would be misleading as Figure 2 is a circuit

schematic. Specifically, Figure 2 depicts a circuit possessing a plurality of closed contact assemblies (i.e., items 266 and 268). If one of those contact assemblies were to be opened or disabled, it would continue to be identified in the circuit schematic of Figure 2 as a contact assembly, but simply in an open state instead of a closed state.

Objection to the Title of the Invention under 37 C.F.R. 1.72(a)

It was asserted that the title of the invention was too long. In response, the title of the invention has been revised based on the suggested title provided by the Examiner.

Rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §112(1)

Claims 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 for being a single means claim, and thus failing to comply with the enablement requirement. Claim 1 has now been amended and should satisfy all 35 U.S.C. §112 requirements.

Rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

Claims 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,903,643 to Bruhnke. Claim 1 has now been amended, calling for a terminal block for connecting a customer with any of a plurality of telecommunications service providers, the block including:

a plurality of connection mechanisms configured to selectively connect a customer to one of at least first and second providers, respectively;

wherein said selective connection is accomplished through physical disruption of at least one of said plurality of connection mechanisms, said physical disruption occurring without inserting or removing wires from the terminal block.

Bruhnke discloses a multi-line interface device for routing incoming and outgoing communication signals. However, in contrast to the terminal block as called for by claim 1, Bruhnke does not disclose any means for disabling a connection mechanism by physically disrupting it. Instead, Bruhnke's interface device is a solid state device, comprising a plurality of line access modules 125 that are electronically controlled by a micro-controller 150. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the 35 U.S.C. §102(e) rejection based on Bruhnke be withdrawn.


CONCLUSION

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Any fees associated with the filing of this paper should be identified in an accompanying transmittal. However, if any additional fees are required in connection with the filing of this paper, permission is given to charge Account No. 18-0013 in the name of Rader, Fishman & Grauer PLLC.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: September 24, 2003

By: 

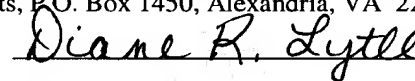
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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING/TRANSMISSION (37 CFR 1.8(a))

I hereby certify that this correspondence is, on the date shown below, being sent via first class mail to Mail Stop Fee Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.



Signature
Diane R. Lytle

Date: September 24, 2003